

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 01983 01 OF 02 131626Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----131830Z 056385 /44-S

P R 131530Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7743  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 1983  
EXDIS  
E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MASS, KU, UR  
SUBJECT: GOK PURCHASE OF SOVIET MISSILES

REF: (A) STATE 72305, (B) KUWAIT 1592, (C) KUWAIT 1941,  
(D) JIDDA 2507

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING MY PRESENTATION APRIL 13, UPON INSTRUCTIONS OF POINTS CONTAINED PARA 2 REF A CONVEYING USG CONCERN RE GOK PURCHASE OF SOVIET STRELLA AND FROG MISSILES, FONMIN EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT EXAGGERATED ATTENTION GIVEN THIS MATTER, SAYING THAT ONLY LIMITED NUMBER OF THESE WEAPONS PURCHASED AND THERE WOULD BE NO SOVIET ADVISORS OR TECHNICIANS. FONMIN STATED NO MORE WEAPONS WOULD BE PURCHASED FROM USSR. HE REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES HOPE THAT FRIENDLY ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USG AND KUWAIT WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED AND ALSO GOK DESIRE TO RELY ON U.S. AS PRINCIPAL ARMS SUPPLIER. I REPEATED USG CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL DISRUPTION OF GULF PEACE AND STABILITY BY INTRODUCTION OF THESE SOVIET WEAPONS AND ASKED GOK TO GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO REVERSING PURCHASE DECISION.

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2. I MET WITH FONMIN SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD (WHO ASKED UNDERSEC AL-RASHID TO ACT AS TRANSLATOR) APRIL 13 IN ORDER TO CONVEY, PURSUANT TO INSTURCTIONS, THE POINTS CONTAINED IN QLA 2 ZOF REF K., PREFARING MY REVIEW OF THESE POINTS WITH THE COMMENT THAT THE U.S. CONSIDERS THE

INTRODUCTION OF SOVIET MISSILES SUCH AS FROG AND STRELLA INTO KUWAIT SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL TO WARRANT THIS APPROACH.

3. SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD THANKED ME FOR PRESENTING THE VIEWS OF MY GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER. HE EXPRESSED HIS SORROW AND SURPRISE THAT THE U.S. THINKS THAT THESE WEAPONS WHICH GOK WAS ACQUIRING FROM USSR WOULD BE USED TO ATTACK ANY NEIGHBOR OR WOULD BE GIVEN TO TERRORISTS. HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT GOK'S POLICY WAS NOT TO PROVIDE WEAPONS TO ANYONE, EVEN A FRIENDLY MOVEMENT SUCH AS THE ONE IN ERITREA. KUWAIT ONLY PROVIDED HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.

4. AS HIS SECOND POINT, THE FONMIN ALSO EXPRESSED HIS SURPRISE THAT SUCH A SMALL TRANSACTION WITH THE USSR WOULD BE GIVEN THIS EXAGGERATED ATTENTION. HE STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT GOK HAD MADE IT CLEAR IT WOULD NOT ACCEPT SOVIET TECHNICIANS OR ADVISORS. THEY WERE NOT AFRAID OF THEM, BUT WOULD NOT WANT TO INTRODUCE THEM INTO THE AREA. HE THEN ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD BE READY TO GIVE KUWAIT ALL THE DEFENSE WEAPONS IT NEEDED.

5. SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE STRELLA IS AN ADVANCED WEAPON WHICH WILL BE VERY USEFUL IN KUWAIT DEFENSE AND THE LUNA (FROG) MISSILE IS A SHORT-RANGE MISSILE WHICH THE GOK REGARDED AS A DEFENSIVE WEAPON. HE HOPED THAT USG WAS AWARE OF THIS KUWAIT VIEW. GOK HAD ONLY BOUGHT A LIMITED SUPPLY OF THESE WEAPONS. THEY WOULD NEED  
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SOME EGYPTIANS TO HELP TRAIN THEM TO OPERATE THEM, BUT HE REPEATED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SOVIET ADVISORS.

6. FONMIN STRESSED THE GOK'S NEED FOR THE WEAPONS IT WAS OBTAINING FROM THE U.S. IF KUWAIT HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR CHEAPER WEAPONS, IT CERTAINLY COULD HAVE OBTAINED THEM FROM THE USSR OR ELSEWHERE, BUT THEY COULD NOT HAVE CONFIDENCE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION AS AN ARMS SUPPLIER. THE GOK WAS THEREFORE, LOOKING TO OBTAIN THE MAJORITY OF THE WEAPONS NEEDED FOR ITS DEFENSE FROM THE U.S.

7. SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS BEST REGARDS TO THE SECRETARY AND HIS USG COLLEAGUES. THROUGH FURTHER COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. THE GOK WOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THE DEFENSIVE WEAPONS IT NEEDED. HE SINCERELY HOPED THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPLY THESE WEAPONS SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE TO TURN TO OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE USSR. IN THIS REGARD HE OBSERVED THAT U.S. MILITARY ADVISORS ARE ALREADY IN KUWAIT, WHILE THERE WILL BE NO SOVIETS.

HE DID NOT WANT SUCH A SMALL ISSUE AS THIS ONE TO AFFECT  
U.S. - KUWAITI COOPERATION IN THIS RESPECT.

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER INSTRUCTIONS SS-O.

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P R 131530Z APR 77  
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KUWAIT 1983  
EXDIS

8. AFTER SHIAKH SABAH AL-AHMAD FINISHED THIS INITIAL  
PRESENTATION, I SUGGESTED THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME  
MISUNDERSTANDING WITH REGARD TO THE POINTS I HAD MADE. THE  
U.S. DID NOT THINK AT ANY TIME THAT KUWAIT WOULD USE THE  
SOVIET MISSILES IT WAS ACQUIRING TO ATTACK A NEIGHBOR OR TO  
GIVE TO TERRORISTS. HOWEVER, ITS CONCERN RELATED TO  
THE FACT THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THESE WEAPONS COULD  
DISRUPT THE STABILITY PRESENTLY EXISTING IN THE GULF  
AREA NAD MIGHT BE REGARDED BY AN UNFRIENDLY COUNTRY UNDER CERTAIN  
CIRCUMSTANCES, AS A PROVOCATION. I ADDED, WITH RESPECT TO  
HIS SECOND POINT, THAT I WAS UNAWARE OF THE EXACT SIZE OF  
THIS ARMS TRANSACTION, WHETHER SMALL OR LARGE.  
(HE DID NOT OFFER TO PROVIDE NUMBERS.)

9. SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AGAIN ASSURED ME THAT KUWAIT  
HAD NO INTENTION TO ATTACK ANYONE AND ITS MAIN AIM WAS  
THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE GULF. HE  
NOTED THAT CERTAIN OF ITS NEIGHBORS WHO HAVE MORE WEAPONS  
WOULD NOT BE FRIGHTENED BY THIS ACQUISITION, AND THAT, IN  
FACT, KUWAIT HAD INFORMED IRAN, IRAQ AND SAUDI ARABIA OF THIS  
PURCHASE. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION CONCERNING THE SAUDI  
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REACTION, HE OBSERVED THAT THEY HAD NO COMMENT. HE RETURNED TO THE QUESTION OF THE STRELLA MISSILES AND SAID THAT THESE COULD BE ACQUIRED IN BEIRUT IN ANY NUMBER. HE ASSURED ME THAT GOK WAS ONLY PURCHASING A SMALL NUMBER OF THESE MISSILES AND THAT THEY WOULD BE KEPT UNDER TIGHT CONTROL.

10 THE FONMIN REFERRED TO OUR GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS AS WELL AS THOSE BETWEEN KUWAIT AND THE U.S. IN EXPRESSING HOPE THAT THE USG WOULD NOT TAKE THIS MATTER SERIOUSLY. AT THE SAME TIME HE HOPED THAT THE ARMS SUPPLY PROGRAM WITH THE U.S. WOULD CONTINUE. HE STATED THAT THE GOK WOULD OBTAIN NO OTHER WEAPONS BEYOND THOSE WHICH THEY HAD JUST PURCHASED FROM THE USSR. HE OBSERVED THAT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE WAS VERY UNHAPPY OVER THIS EXPRESSION OF USG VIEWS (REF C) BUT THAT HE HAD ASSURED HIM OF HIS CONVICTION THAT, BECAUSE OF U.S. - KUWAITI FRINDSHIP, THE CURRENT U.S. ARMS SUPPLY PROGRAM WOULD CONTINUE.

11. I ASSURED SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD THAT THE USG WAS PRESENT-ING THESE VIEWS AS A FRIEND INTERESTED IN PRESERVING PEACE AND STABILITY IN KUWAIT AND IN THE REST OF THE GULF AS WELL. IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT WE HOPED THE GOK WOULD GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO REVERSING THIS DECISION TO PURCHASE SOVIET MISSILES. I UNDERLINED THE POINT MADE IN MY INITIAL PRESENTATION REGARDING THE JUSTIFIATION OF THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO KUWAIT AND OUR CONCERN THAT THIS MIGHT BE WEAKEND BY THE PURCHASE OF THE FROGS. THE FONMIN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE USG WOULD CONVINCE CONGRESS THAT THE GOK HAS NO AGGESSIVE INTENTIONS. THE GOK WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO FURTHER ARMS TRANSACTION WITH THE U.S. BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT WISH TO GREATLY DIVERSIFY ITS ARMS SOURCES WHICH HE NOTED "WOULD COST TOO MUCH BOTH HUMAN-WISE AND POLICY WISE". AS WE CONCLUDED OUR DISCUSSION OF THIS QUESTION, I SAID I HOPED THAT THE GOK WOULD GIVE USG VIEWS ON THIS MATTER FURTHER THOUGHT AND CONSIDERAT.

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12. COMMENT: AS THE DEPT. CORRECTLY OBSERVED IN PARA 2 OF REF A, THERE ARE LIMITATIONS IN OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE KUWAIT BILATERALLY AND THE UNRESPONSIVE REACTIONS OF BOTH THE DEFENSE MINISTER AND THE FONMIN CAME AS NO SURPRISE. HOWEVER, THEY WERE BOTH CLEARLY IMPRESSED BY THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE MATTER, WHICH WAS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT IN THE FONMIN'S RESORTING TO ARABIC FOR HIS PRESENTATION,

WHEREAS MOST OF OUR RECENT DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN IN ENGLISH. MY CONVERSATION WITH THE FONMIN DEMONSTRATED DEFINITE GOK CONCERN OVER HOW THIS DEMARCHE MIGHT AFFECT THEIR ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AS NOTED ABOVE, SHAIKH SABAH CL-AHMAD MENTIONED THIS POINT SEVERAL TIMES. BESIDES PERHAPS BROADENING THE GOK OUTLOOK ON POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS OF THEIR PURCHASE OF SOVIET MISSILES, OUR REPRESENTATIONS DID PRODUCE THE STATEMENT THAT THE GOK DID NOT INTEND TO ACQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL SOVIET WEAPONS BEYONE THE STRELLA AND FROG. NOR DOES IT APPEAR THAT GOK IS ACQUIRING THESE WEAPONS TO GIVE TO ANOTHER ARAB COUNTRY. THE KUWAITI LEADERS SEEM TO BE CONVINCED OF THEIR NEED FOR THIS KIND OF A DETERRENT, EVEN THOUGH THEIR LOGIC IS UNREALISTIC. DEPENDING, OF COURSE, ON HOW OUR ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPS UNDER THE ADMINISTRATIONS'S NEW ARMS TRANSFER POLICY, I FEEL CERTAIN THAT THE GOK WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK THE ARMS IT NEEDS FIRST FROM THE U.S. IF THEY ARE NOT DISCOURAGED IN THIS EFFORT, I WOULD NOT RULE OUT THEIR POSSIBLY CANCELLING THE FROG PURCHASE AT SOME LATTER DATE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES OPPORPRIATE TO SUCH AN ACTION. MOREOVER, OPPORTUNITIES TO BROADEN U.S. INFLUENCE ON KUWAITI POLICIES AS THE RESULT OF A REASONABLE ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP COULD INCREASE IN MY OPINION.

13. DEFENSE MINISTER SHAIKH SA'AD WILL VISIT SAUDI ARABIA BEGINNING APRIL 16 AS THE GUEST OF PRINCE NAYEF, INTERIOR MINISTER. I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY REPORT WHICH INDICATES THAT EMBASSY JIDDA HAS INFORMED THE SAG OF THE LINE WE WERE TO TAKE

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WITH THE GOK ON THIS MATTER. IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE THE SAUDIS TO REFLECT THEIR UNHAPPINESS OVER THE EXTENT OF SOVIET RELATIONSHIPS WITH KUWAIT AT THE TIME OF SHAIKH SA'AD'S VISIT,THIS, I BELIVE, MIGHT NOT DO ANY HARM. MAESTRONE

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER INSTRUCTIONS SS-O.

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